

## **LEADING INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY IN SACRAMENTO AND ENABLING K-12 EXCELLENCE STATEWIDE**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9 AND THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10  
SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
5735 47TH AVENUE  
SACRAMENTO, CA

### **MEETING AGENDA**

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#### **DAY I: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9**

- 8:30 am      **Breakfast.** Light breakfast will be available in the South Carolina room.
- 9:00 am      **Convene Meeting.** Joel Knudson will convene the meeting with opening remarks, introductions, and an overview of the agenda. Superintendent Jorge Aguilar will welcome the group to Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD).

#### **SESSION I**

##### ***Exploring the Sacramento Path to Educational Excellence***

As educators in SCUSD navigate the ongoing transition back from the many disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, they do so in the face of profound student needs that include significant unfinished learning. These demands underscore the relevance and importance of efforts to improve instruction through a strategic focus on professional learning. The meeting will open with an orientation from SCUSD leaders to the current state of student learning progress, partnerships through which the district is charting a path forward, the district's theory of action for improvement, and an emerging definition of high-quality instruction that will guide those efforts.

*Session Purpose.* Build participant understanding of the Sacramento context, including its history, its journey toward instructional improvement, and the assets and limitations that shape the path forward.

- 9:40 am      **Orientation to the SCUSD Context.** A presentation from SCUSD district leaders, supplemented by remarks from partners from outside the district, will provide background on the district and its history, including a characterization of its historical approach to classroom instruction.
- 10:25 am      **Break.**

10:40 am      **The SCUSD Theory of Action.** SCUSD leaders will describe work underway with several outside partners that has helped the district to focus its efforts on improving instructional quality. This overview will also introduce the theory of action that guides these efforts.

## SESSION II

### *Building Capacity and Providing Support to Site Leaders*

Site administrators play a crucial role in district efforts to support high-quality instruction. In SCUSD, an emphasis on school leaders is both a reflection of the district's belief that principals should be strong instructional leaders and a pragmatic response to details in the collective bargaining agreement with the teachers union that shape the time available for teacher professional learning. This session will explore the responsibilities of site administrators as key agents of change and examine the structures and supports that can empower and equip principals to lead the work at school sites.

*Session Purposes.* Consider the role of principals as instructional leaders within schools. Explore district approaches to prepare and support principals as instructional leaders.

11:10 am      **Developing Site Leadership in SCUSD.** This session will begin with a brief profile of the current SCUSD state of affairs with respect to principals. A panel of instructional assistant superintendents will then share perspectives on the site leadership experience within SCUSD, as well as emerging efforts to build the capacity of principals to foster a culture centered around instructional improvement. Reflections from other district leaders and questions from meeting participants will follow.

12:00 pm      **Lunch.**

12:45 pm      **Problem-of-Practice Consultancies.** Participants will reconvene in small groups to address specific aspects of a district's work with to support leaders.

## SESSION III

### *Leveraging Site Leaders to Foster a Coherent Approach to Educator Professional Learning*

Improving the quality of instruction and classrooms requires that administrators and teachers have the capacity to implement high-quality instructional practices. Because SCUSD principals play a vital role in promoting and supporting these practices, efforts to build coherence in professional learning rely on their ability to develop trusting relationships, establish and maintain a culture of instructional improvement, and ensure consistency in classroom practice. Building on conversations in Session II, which emphasized district supports for principals, this session will begin with the lens of how principals help to build the capacity of school-based educators. This session will also provide an opportunity to consider approaches to developing a system of professional learning that is coherent and aligned with other district priorities while fostering sustainability.

*Session Purposes.* Examine the ways in which principals can understand and address educators' professional learning needs within a school site. Explore ways in which district and site leaders can foster coherence in professional learning opportunities within and across schools.

- 2:00 pm      **Reflections on Systems for Professional Learning.** Drawing on literature about high-quality professional development, participants will consider the components and considerations of an effective *system* of professional learning.
- 2:15 pm      **Principal Perspectives on Professional Learning Opportunities and Needs.** A panel of SCUSD principals will describe their perceptions of educator learning opportunities and needs, as well as the conditions that can help site leaders guide and support high-quality instruction.
- 3:10 pm      **Break.**
- 3:25 pm      **Small Group Discussion.** Participants will break into small groups to explore promising strategies and obstacles to developing a coherent system of professional development.
- 4:45 pm      **Summary and Reflection on the Day's Discussion.**
- 5:00 pm      **Adjourn for the Day.**
- 6:00 pm      **Reception Followed by Dinner** at Scott's Seafood.

## DAY 2: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10

8:30 am      **Breakfast.** Light breakfast will be available in the South Carolina room.

9:00am      **Summary of Day 1 Conversation.**

### SESSION IV

#### *Understanding and Navigating the Current Policy Context*

After a period of minimal state activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, the recent introduction of new programmatic state initiatives and associated funding streams have presented local educators with needed opportunities and resources on the one hand and with additional regulatory requirements on the other.

*Session Purposes.* Build mutual understanding among policymakers, practitioners, and other education leaders of key K-12 education issues and shared goals. Examine ways in which state policy can best support the work of educators on the ground.

9:15 am      **Understanding California's Education Policy and Funding Landscape.** The meeting will begin with an opportunity to set the broad context for California's current and future work. The State Board of Education and legislature have been active in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in establishing programs and funding streams to support key education priorities. Meanwhile, California's financial picture continues to evolve, and will shape the possibilities for policy activity moving forward. A panel discussion among key policy actors will help to frame the anticipated path ahead.

10:15 am      **Reflecting on Statewide Developments and Key Issues.** Having considered observations on the current and upcoming policy landscape, a panel of local education leaders will add their perspectives from the ground about our central educational priorities, opportunities, and constraints.

11:00 am      **Break.**

11:15 am      **Charting a Path Forward.** Having considered the policy conditions that are likely to guide K-12 education in the near future and the local dynamics that shape what happens in districts and schools, participants will break into small groups to identify potential solutions.

12:30 pm      **Lunch.**

### SESSION V

#### *Connecting the Dots*

The meeting began with a thorough exploration of ways that districts can foster instructional excellence through professional learning and work with school administrators. Having then examined the broader policy environment, the meeting will close with a consideration of how that environment shapes the work underway in districts like SCUUSD.

*Session Purpose:* With the goal of promoting coherence in educational improvement efforts, connect the dots across the meeting to see how policy efforts intersect with, support, and/or detract from the pursuit of high-quality instruction.

- 1:00 pm      **Full Group Discussion.** Meeting participants will discuss the implications of the morning’s discussion for the work of instructional improvement.
  
- 1:45 pm      **Summary and Reflection on the Day’s Discussion.**
  
- 2:00 pm      **Adjourn Meeting.**